Labour Monthly

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

6d

SPECIAL ENLARGED ISSUE

OUR FIRST QUARTER OF A CENTURY *by the Editor*

OUTLOOK AFTER BOURNEMOUTH *Harry Pollitt*

THE ELECTIONS IN EUROPE *William Rust*

BOMBAY TRAVEL NOTES No. 3 *R. Palme Dutt*

July, 1946

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"Our Reconstruction Fund"

The twenty-seven volumes of a quarter-century's LABOUR MONTHLY look very solid ranged upon their shelf in our editorial office. Every year is there, though the last volumes look very slim and you might imagine the life of our magazine has been hanging on a very slender thread indeed in the three years just passed. To know the true reason for recent shrunken volumes you have to hear the story of the production dilemma we had to solve—to make our tiny paper quota stretch out to reach a readership so much larger than we had in the years up to 1939.

Many, many other tales could be told of the background to this quarter-century of unbroken publication which none would suspect who just gaze upon the twenty-seven volumes. There is, for example, another shelf in the office, bearing the recorded history of a very grim struggle almost ceaselessly waged by the Editor and his colleagues, the struggle to make both ends meet. For this shelf carries the account books of LABOUR MONTHLY and contains the story of income so often failing to reach liabilities, with a gap which advertising revenue never bridged.

Yet the gap was bridged, again and again. Devoted friends of the movement and of LABOUR MONTHLY came forward at each crisis and saved the magazine from falling into that abyss which contains the corpses of many a publishing venture launched between the two wars. In recent years the donations for that bridge have been furnished with monthly

(*Continued on page iii. of cover*)

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Our First Quarter of a Century

25 years of the LABOUR MONTHLY. *It is not often that a journal of the international labour movement can claim so long a period of continuous publication.*

25 years is not a short period in the history of modern labour movement. One century has passed since the publication of the Communist Manifesto. During one-quarter of that epoch—and that the most eventful quarter for the most decisive period of world change—the LABOUR MONTHLY *has given its continuous analysis, record and interpretation of the events and its contribution to discussion and political leadership.*

We have striven consistently from the outset for the aims of unity of the labour movement, international co-operation, freedom of all nations, democracy and socialism. Our very first numbers from 1921 *demonstrated the method of drawing contributors from a broad and representative front. We have sought to interpret events in the light of Marxism, not in terms of ready-made formulas, but on the basis of objective treatment of concrete facts.*

Our journal seeks to appeal to thinking men and women of the working-class movement who recognise the necessity of a serious effort to grapple with the new problems of the modern era. We have striven for hard thinking, honest thinking and clear thinking. Despite all limitations we believe that our journal has been able to fulfil a useful function and play its part for the development of progressive thought and activity. Our circulation has increased from a few thousands in the early years to over fifty thousand before paper restriction, and now under paper restriction stands at twenty thousand. There are few countries in the world to which our journal does not reach. On my travels I have found warm friends of the LABOUR MONTHLY *in every town I have passed through.*

These 25 *volumes of the* LABOUR MONTHLY *now belong to the historical record. Indeed, they are a contemporary record of* 25 *years of moving history seen from the standpoint of those who were striving to aid the birth of the new world. Plenty of follies and errors are embedded in those volumes. Yet, our analysis of these* 25 *years can stand in comparison today with any other*

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periodical in the English-speaking world in that same period by the measure of correctness of judgment on the great issues on which most other periodicals had shown a sorry record. From the Versailles Treaty and the temporary stabilisation of the 'twenties: the illusory basis of the restoration of the gold standard and the significance of the economic decline in Britain; Red Friday and the General Strike; the prediction of the world economic crisis; the fight against fascism from 1922 *onwards; the first exposure of British pro-fascist foreign policy and Anglo-Nazi co-operation from* 1933 *onwards, traced year by year; the forewarning of Munich and the fight against the Munich policies; the handling of the successive phases of the second world war: and so to the post-war era and the fight against the third world war: our journal can stand upon its record.*

Now we enter into new conditions and problems. The fight between democracy and reaction has advanced to new forms. The confrontation between Western Imperialist reaction and the Freedom Front of the European democracies, the Soviet Union and the colonial peoples is at this moment very sharp. This conflict raises the danger of a third world war. But the popular forces are considerably stronger and more alert than before the second world war. The rate of world advance is enormously greater than a quarter of a century ago. In Britain today, and above all in the British labour movement, all the contradictions of the new era are centred. Through all the coming conflicts and changes the LABOUR MONTHLY *will set itself to continue its work to assist the progress of the working-class and democratic movement, to the final victory of the aims for which our journal fights in common with the international working-class, for the final defeat of imperialism and reaction and the victory of full democracy and the completion of democracy in Socialism.*

R. PALME DUTT.

June 7, 1946.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

WHEN the first number of the LABOUR MONTHLY appeared in July, 1921, it was in a post-war period of a very different kind to that in which the magazine begins its second quarter-century. Then an imperialist world war had been followed by a robber peace. Then in the chief capitalist countries reactionary governments installed in the post-war elections were vying with one another in repressive measures against subject classes and subject peoples: the Black-and-Tans in Ireland, martial law in Egypt, the Amritsar Massacre of 1919 followed by the Moplah death-train of 1921, were then the hall-mark of British imperialist rule. After the imperialist war, when the Russian Revolution had inspired the hopes of millions of mankind, the capitalist world had rocked to its foundations. The peoples had tried to bring about the downfall of capitalist class-rule. Limitless prospects of socialist and democratic advance were opened up. Throughout Europe the capitalists had to give ground, to concede, to manoeuvre, to distribute pledges and promises with a lavish hand: everywhere then was a revolutionary democratic offensive, everywhere a strategic retreat of the ruling class. At the same time, while the statesmen temporised and manoeuvred at home, they were sending the armies of intervention to destroy the first workers' Republic. Fourteen powers from 1918 to the end of 1920 invaded Soviet Russia.

Then . . .

By 1921 the troops of intervention had been defeated: one-sixth of the world was socialist: but in the rest of the world capitalism had survived. The revolutionary advance had come to a halt. With the slump and mass unemployment of 1920-21, a capitalist offensive was launched against the conditions of the working-class. In Britain mid-summer 1921 witnessed the end of a three months' lock-out of the miners, after they had been abandoned by their allies on Black Friday. The next spring, a national lock-out of the engineers was fought by the Amalgamated Engineering Union. In other industries, Mr. Bevin has told us recently how he and another general secretary decided not to follow the example of the miners' and engineers' leaders:—

> We decided in the end, at the expense of those in the steel trade, in the tin-plate trade, in the copper trade and in chemicals, to take a reduction of over £2 a week to try to get South American and other trade going. (House of Commons, 13/2/46.)

Mass unemployment and wage-cuts, either resisted or submitted to without struggle, were the lot of the British workers twenty-five years ago. In the post-war period when this magazine began, capitalism, taking advantage of the divisions in the working-class movement, was already beginning its assault on democracy and socialism.

. . . and Now.

Today, after the military defeat of Nazi Germany and the other fascist powers, the situation is altered. In Europe, amid the devastation and upheaval, a new spirit is breathing in the countries liberated from fascism, manifested most strongly and purely in the new democracies that were once puppet states. In Asia the Chinese Revolution, the Indonesian Republic, the advanced stage of struggle for independence in India, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, enrols the greater half of mankind in political activity and in the democratic fight to determine their own destinies. In every country the working-class has advanced; in Britain, Churchill and the Tories were ceremoniously rejected; in Italy, France, Czechoslovakia, etc., the combined strength of the Socialist and Communist parties out-tops any other

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parties, while, as William Rust shows in this issue, the significance of these elections goes far beyond the numerical results. The Communist parties are now strongest in the countries where they were once banned and proscribed and their leaders, once living underground or in exile with a price on their heads, are now leading members of governments in nearly all the liberated countries. Everywhere the trade unions are greater in numbers, stronger in their unity, more important within their nations and capable now of setting a seal upon their strength by joining together in the World Federation of Trade Unions whose absence hitherto registered the power of capitalism to divide and rule. Above all, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, once cordoned off as a plague-spot of anti-capitalism, emerges now as the one state which could withstand the concentrated attack of the Nazi armies with its moral and political unity steadfast. Its Red Army liberated the greater part of Nazi-occupied Europe, and its government has now entered into friendly close relations, economic, political and cultural, with the governments of the liberated peoples. Undoubtedly, it is a very different kind of post-war situation from that which existed twenty-five years ago.

A World-Wide Struggle.

Throughout these twenty-five years a struggle went on between the democratic forces of the people and the reactionary forces of monopoly capitalism. This struggle was world-wide, assuming a hundred forms. But one thing marked it out from previous epochs where reactionaries fought to suppress subject classes and subject peoples. Now they campaigned also against the Soviet State, which had withdrawn one-sixth of the world from the clutch of monopoly capitalism and was a beacon to the oppressed in every country. The whole of world politics was dominated by this antagonism to the Soviet Union: and every other struggle was seen in relation to this struggle.

Everywhere statesmen warned the working-class and the peasantry against Communism. Princes of the Church joined in an anti-Bolshevik crusade. Elections were conducted on the basis of the Bolshevik bogey. Forged documents, like the "nationalisation of women decree" of 1918, became a regular currency in the political black market. To its eternal infamy, the Tory Party took the benefit of the forged "Zinovieff letter," which swung the electorate in 1924. The mention of Communism was enough to make capitalist statesmen exhibit the signs of mania: and in their hostility to it all scruples were flung to the winds. The civilised mask of capitalist politicians was dropped: espionage on working-class organisations and opening in the post of private correspondence became wide-spread; while imprisonment of political opponents, largely dormant within Great Britain for nearly a century, was revived by a Conservative Home Secretary and imitated by his successors when the renegade Ramsay Macdonald imprisoned the seventy-seven-year-old Tom Mann. For twenty years the millionaire press on the U.S.S.R. reached what Bernard Shaw called "a record in mendacity."

As the campaign grew from 1921 onwards, measures of suppressions were enforced in one country after another. In the countries along the *cordon sanitaire*, the communist parties were suppressed first; then the trade unions were crippled; then democratic rights were taken from minority populations; then constitutions were suspended, civil rights abrogated; while in some countries elections, now become a nauseous farce, were continued, in others they were done away with. In large parts of Europe the struggle against the working-class under slogans of anti-communism had paved

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the way for fascism. Before Hitler and the Nazis came to power in 1933 democracy had been destroyed, corrupted or weakened in every capitalist country of Europe. Everywhere the fatal process was hastened by the divisions in the ranks of the working-class. In trade unions and political parties there was a deep division from which the reactionaries profited and which they utilised to develop their campaign of antagonism to the only Socialist State.

Corruptible Flesh.

The League of Nations, whose covenant was proclaimed to be the means of ending war, was vitiated from its birth by this antagonism. Not only were the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. outside it; but the Council of the League was soon revealed to be little more than an instrument of Anglo-French imperialism against the Soviet Union. The worm was in it from the beginning. Symptoms of the spectacular decadence of Liberalism in these twenty-five years were seen in the arguments "for or against the League" with a Gilbert Murray or a Robert Cecil wilfully blind to the fact that their temple of the Holy Ghost was a kitchen of anti-Soviet intrigue; and that Sir John Simon, putting the case for Japan in 1931 (when the seizure of Manchuria marked the first stage in the second world war) was merely preventing a potential Far-Eastern enemy of the U.S.S.R. from being weakened. Though in its last few years the withdrawal, one after another, of the Axis Powers from Geneva made the League of Nations at last a potential, if enfeebled, instrument for peace, it was already too late for this change to be effective. Its Anglo-French creators had no longer any use for it. To a Neville Chamberlain the League of Nations sanctions against Fascist Italy's aggression on Abyssinia were "midsummer madness": and his anti-Soviet policy was now conducted in concert with Hitler and Mussolini at other continental cities than Geneva. In its last days the League of Nations became once more anti-Soviet: and its last disgraceful meeting that expelled the Soviet Union in December, 1939 was ecstatically hailed by Gilbert Murray as the final grand performance of duty. His ideal League had at last taken on flesh. Corruptible flesh indeed, and only now to be recalled because of the present danger that U.N.O. may be similarly regarded by Anglo - American imperialism and their satellites as a suitable arena in which to bait the Bolsheviks.

Germany as "Spearhead."

When the temporary stabilisation of capitalism after the 1921 slump had been reached (by throwing the burden upon the working-class, as Mr. Bevin witnesses), the uneasy equilibrium between the capitalist world and the socialist republics remained for a little while: and during this time the U.S.S.R. (then engaged in reconstruction after well-nigh seven years of war, intervention and civil war) was formally recognised by a minority of the other states. But this formality had in it no friendship. On the contrary, the foreign policy of the great capitalist powers continued hostile, even if they were not able immediately to translate their unfriendly attitude into hostile acts. The key to British foreign policy, through the Curzon ultimatum, Locarno Treaties, the Arcos raid and similar incidents, was the building up of Germany, partly as a counterpoise to France, but mainly as a prospective spearhead of a renewed capitalist attack upon the socialist state (a function ultimately fulfilled, but under different conditions from those anticipated) and the maintenance of the border states in their anti-Bolshevik hysteria. When the world economic crisis of 1929 onward, reaching its greatest depth in the mass unemployment of 1932, plunged capitalism in sore straits, the Nazi seizure of power seemed to bring

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opportunity within the grasp of British reaction. The Nazis were helped in every way possible, the Anglo-German Naval Treaty of 1935 was carried through with the idea that the Nazis should be given submarines against the Red Navy (submarines which were destined to sink many British ships), the idea of a Western Bloc centring round a quadrilateral of Britain, France, Germany and Italy (implicit already in Locarno) was now canvassed by successive foreign secretaries and prime ministers. No one thought the U.S.S.R. harboured warlike intentions. Everyone knew that Hitler had aggressive intentions. The calculation was to turn the Nazis against the socialist state. This was the meaning of the apparent pusillanimity with which they regarded the successive violations of their Versailles Treaty and the Covenant of the League, this was behind the Hoare-Laval pact of autumn, 1935, this was the root of "non-intervention" in Spain for the benefit of Franco, Mussolini and Hitler.

The Fiasco.

But guns do not go off in one direction. As the editor of this magazine wrote in April, 1939:—

Aesop tells a tale of a man who tried to bring up a lion cub. What happened when the lion grew up may be found in Aesop. For six years Britain has fostered its lion cub, Hitler, in the hope of having a fine hefty lion to let loose on the Soviet Union. The lion has now grown up and the most critical moment of British policy is here. How to ensure that the lion will do its duty and not prefer the soft flesh of its keeper? Lion-taming is a risky profession; and lion-tamers must terrorise or go under. The appropriate means of pressure must be found to force the lion to do its job. Hence desperate rearmament; but that alone is not enough; the whip is not yet strong enough for the lion. Therefore it is entirely in keeping that at this moment British policy under Chamberlain should appear to make a sudden turn to the most violent and threatening speeches against Hitler, and should make the most positive demonstrations of a possible linking up with the Soviet Union, France and the United States against Hitler. This may go much further in the coming period: exchanges of missions and representations, cordial references in speeches, Chamberlain drinking the health of Litvinov—everything to make Germany furious, everything short of a clear binding alliance and engagement. All this is not yet a change of policy. *It is the whip for the lion.*

Even after this policy had reached its fiasco, the episode of the "phoney war," the expedition prepared for Finland and the Weygand plans for the bombing of Baku shows how dearly the anti-Communist policy was cherished. Later still, as war memoirs have now revealed, the political opposition to the Second Front was part of Churchill's double policy, the anti-Communist part which has now become his whole stock-in-trade.

Democratic Gains.

During these twenty-five years there were heroic struggles of the working-class and the peoples; in the early years heroic rearguard actions, like the British miners' struggle of 1926; in the middle years, vanguard actions, like the heroism of the International Brigade, which compelled the Labour Party in 1937 to leave its support of the Tory "non-intervention" policy. No matter how the reactionaries operated, the pace of social development could not be held up. The world economic crisis which brought such evils to hundreds of millions, at the same time impelled them to find a way out of their destitution and misery. Throughout Europe in the 'thirties the overwhelming popular forces were ripening. As they developed, so they exerted an irresistible influence on the course of events and the policies of governments. In the course of the war the actions, the sacrifices and the heroism of the masses themselves made it a true people's war, a war of liberation. In this war of democracy against fascism, the most diverse elements were

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compelled to help the popular forces (e.g., Churchill willy-nilly having to help the Resistance groups), until after the tribulations of years the fascists were defeated and the people came into their own.

Dark Forces.

In this new post-war era, at this new plane of development of the popular forces, can the clock be set back? Can the grip of the big trusts be refastened upon the parts and peoples of Europe that have defeated fascism, taken over the big estates and curbed the power of capital? Can the Bolshevik bogy, used to the last by the war-criminals at Nuremberg, be refurbished and used again? Despite the answer already given in the European elections, despite the clear expression of the people's will in Britain a year ago, there are dark forces that have set themselves this retrogressive task. They are setting about the consolidation of reaction, instead of destroying and rooting out the remnants of fascism. For them an Anglo-American bloc, the destruction of Three-Power Unity, the tearing up of Potsdam and the breaking of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty by a separate peace would give the prospect of halting the democratic and socialist advance of the peoples: and if this be the way to another war, they are prepared to travel that road. Against these dark forces the peoples of every country have to maintain the utmost vigilance. Reaction has to be fought in whatever guise it presents itself and wherever it may find a lodgment.

Foreign Policy.

For his foreign policy Mr. Bevin has obtained from the Labour Party Conference the same enthusiastic cheering as was given to the policy of Ramsay Macdonald; and from the Tories such a chorus of approval as even Macdonald never received until he betrayed his party. It is an ominous sign for the British people, a sign for all trade unionists and co-operators to ponder over. On the working out of this foreign policy at the Second Paris Conference, which meets as these notes are being written, it is not yet possible to comment. But enough has happened in these last months to make one thing unmistakably clear. Three - Power Unity cannot be preserved, nor can the hopes of the United Nations be realised, if two powers, linked by the cash nexus of the American Loan, attempt to dictate the settlement of questions in dispute. Nor is it likely that a foreign policy will correspond to the interests of the British people if material facts about that policy are not revealed to the public. It was not till the *Daily Worker* examined the control of the Danube that members of the Labour Party could realise that "the bellies of the people" there were empty precisely because Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes had held up the shipping on that great river: or that the treaties about the Danube Commission were like the "unequal treaties" in China, relics of a past epoch when British capitalism had a finger in every pie and was able to treat the smaller nations as "lesser breeds." It would be part of a return to the nightmare years if obsolete "British interests" of this kind were to be defended in the new era.

R. PAGE ARNOT.

June 18, 1946.

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Outlook after Bournemouth

by HARRY POLLITT

BY now most readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY will have been made familiar with the main character of the discussions and decisions of the 45th Annual Conference of the Labour Party at Bournemouth. No one who attended this conference would doubt the tremendous feeling of victory among the delegates arising from the defeat of the Tories at the last General Election and the wide scope of constructive legislation on the home front that has either already been carried through by the Labour Government, or will shortly become operative.

This victory feeling was the predominating impression. Yet at the same time any serious political observer could not help thinking that there was a certain dangerous tendency expressed (mainly as a result of the leadership of the platform) towards being "giddy with success." For at no time during the proceedings was any serious effort made by the leadership to face the Conference up to the grim realities of the acute political and economic questions that will begin to arise with increasing gravity. No effort at all was made to give any analysis of Britain's economic position either in relation to the situation at home or against the background of the international situation as a whole. From this follows failure to evolve the kind of perspective, based on a correct analysis, that would enable the Conference to formulate its policy decisions more closely in accord with the facts of the situation.

This weakness not only continues to feed existing illusions, but places the movement in a position where it may be taken off its guard, unprepared for the severity of the struggle which the British working-class will have to increasingly face from the capitalists.

In this article I do not propose to go into every aspect of the Bournemouth Conference. I want to deal principally with the matter which, in the minds of all who were present, whether they would admit it or not, was the shadow that hung over the Conference. For shadow there was. It hovered over the Conference from the moment the delegates began to arrive to their preliminary meetings, right up to the end of the Conference. It was the shadow of war. I do not mean by that that war is imminent, but there was an instinctive fear that, consciously or unconsciously, the course of foreign policy which the Labour Government is adopting may lead to a new world war some years from now, unless that course is altered.

If after one year of a Tory Government the international position had deteriorated as it has done since July, 1945, and especially if relations between Britain and the Soviet Union had reached the critical stage they have, one could easily imagine how the mass pressure of the movement would have made itself felt on the Labour Party leaders and the reaction of the Bournemouth Conference to such a development. Short shrift would have been given to any attempt to place the responsibility on the Soviet Government or its people. It would have been placed squarely where it belonged—on the Tory Government. But when such a situation exists after a year of the Labour Government, despite Mr. Bevin's oratory, it is impossible to avoid facing his Government with the same responsibility.

Indeed, at the Blackpool Labour Party Conference in May, 1945, before the General Election, at which, on Mr. Bevin's own admission, the Labour Party did not expect to become the Government, the Right Hon. Hugh

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Dalton, M.P., placed the question of Anglo-Soviet relations in their right perspective when he declared:—

It is indispensable that we should do everything to ensure the closest contact and adopt every possible means of removing any suspicions which may linger between the Soviet Government and the British Government, or between the broad masses of the Russian people on the one hand and the broad masses of our own people on the other. Given that Anglo-Soviet relations are still clouded from time to time by suspicions and misunderstanding, I most emphatically hold that a British Labour Government is far more likely to remove these suspicions than a British Tory Government.

You have only to read that quotation again and think of the present situation, to grasp how badly the Labour Government has failed to fulfil the aim that was set for it by Dalton.

If anyone thinks I am exaggerating the importance attached to the foreign policy of the Labour Government by the movement, they should take note of one very important fact. More resolutions on various aspects of foreign policy had been placed on the agenda by Divisional Labour Parties—and these are the bodies in close touch and who carry out the detailed work of the labour movement—than on any other subject. These resolutions were compressed into various composite resolutions in the drafting of which much of the original vigour and critical character of the original resolutions had been lost. Nevertheless, as they stood in relation to the whole character of the foreign policy in Spain, U.S.S.R. and Palestine they reflected the deep-seated concern that is daily being expressed in every workshop and local Labour organisation.

After nine speakers had moved, seconded and supported these resolutions, the debate closed. But Mr. Laski announced that he had received the demand from sixty-six delegates to speak and twenty-seven other delegates desired to speak on foreign policy, This is an unprecedented number. It reveals the widespread distrust, confusion and, as one delegate accurately put it, "bewilderment" that exists in relation to the Labour Government's foreign policy. Mr. Bevin's speech did nothing to remove these feelings. There was the same concern and anxiety at the finish as when he began. In fact, amongst the more thoughtful and far-seeing delegates the alarm was increased because if Mr. Bevin made one thing clear (apart from creating the impression that he is the only member of the Labour Government who has ever made any suggestion or had any ideas) it was that he is fully determined to do everything in his power to strengthen the Anglo-American bloc against the Soviet Union and the new democratic Europe.

I will say at once that if this course is persisted in, its consequences may be mass unemployment and war. This course, if persisted in, must lead to disaster, not for the people of the Soviet Union, but for the people of Britain. From the moment the Labour Government came to power its main orientation in foreign policy has been for an alliance with aggressive American Imperialism as opposed to any honest or sincere efforts to secure an understanding with the Soviet Union.

Much play is made with Mr. Bevin's offer of a fifty years treaty to the Soviet Union. But surely it is not the length of this treaty that matters, whether it is for one year or for a hundred years—but the spirit and aim behind such a treaty.

The systematic efforts that have been made to destroy the unity of Britain, America and the Soviet Union are the real preliminaries for the Anglo-American bloc. Yet if a life and death military struggle against fascism demanded the unity of these three powers and without that unity

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fascism could not have been destroyed, surely the still more difficult problems of winning the peace in the interests of the common people demand an even stronger unity between these three great powers.

Naturally, in such a complicated situation as the world faces today, there will be differences of opinion on various problems that arise. But there were serious differences between the big powers in the course of the war against fascism. The example was the quite definite view of America and the Soviet Union on the urgency of opening a Second Front as opposed to that of Britain, who had a totally different conception of military strategy. Nevertheless, deep as these differences were, they were amicably settled in the end. They had to be settled, because the victory over fascism had to be won. The differences which exist between the Big Three powers have, as they can be, also to be resolved if peace is to be made permanent and world security a reality.

How does it come about that from the moment that the war ended such a change could take place in the relations of the Big Three powers? I do not feel that any single explanation is possible. There are a variety of factors which have to be taken into consideration, amongst which it seems to me that the following constitute the principal reasons.

(1) The British and American capitalists never expected the Soviet Union to emerge from the war against fascism as the strong, virile power in international politics it is today. They knew they could not defeat Hitler without the Red Army and they worked in alliance with it, but they hoped the price of victory over fascism would also be a tremendous weakening of its greatest enemy—Communism. Instead of this, the opposite has been the case and all over Europe the influence of Communism is reflecting itself in the mass support it receives from the people, as witness the votes cast for the Communist Parties in Czecho-Slovakia, France and Italy in particular.

This, alongside the strength of the Soviet Union, is the fundamental reason why capitalism, through the Governments of Britain and America, is renewing its traditional hostility to the Soviet Union and to Communism. That is why there is an Anglo-American bloc and why, in the name of "democracy," threats are being made to call separate peace conferences and make separate peace treaties.

(2) The struggle against fascism, representing as it does the most reactionary section of monopoly capitalism, obviously entails a weakening of the capitalist system as a whole. This has been strikingly proved by the political awakening that manifested itself in the General Election victory in Britain and the new democratic Europe that has emerged to play a stronger position in world affairs with every month that passes. This latter point is particularly applicable to the Balkan countries, where reaction has received a smashing blow and the world forces of progress new and powerful allies.

(3) The American imperialists never made any bones about their intention of trying to obtain for American imperialism the dominating position in world affairs that German fascism had sought to obtain. Neither do they make any bones about their intention of keeping Britain a very junior partner, as far as Anglo-American co-operation in future is concerned.

(4) The unholy alliance of Social Democracy and aggressive American imperialism, against the Soviet Union and the new world, represents the last stages of the struggle between a dying capitalist form of society and the new advancing socialist order of society.

In my opinion, these are a few of the

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principal reasons which explain the change which has come upon the international scene. If there are any others, then, no doubt, they will be advanced. But if you read carefully the speeches of responsible leaders of America and Britain, you cannot fail to note that they have deliberately embarked upon a war against the working-class, as expressed in the aims and aspirations for which Communism stands. They never make a single speech without referring to their desire for peace—but Hitler himself was an adept at this type of propaganda. They never make a speech without protesting their friendship for the Soviet Union and in the same speech they invariably make an attack on Communism, which they allege is contrary to civilisation. They make every effort to divide the world as between alleged "progressive democratic powers of the West" and the nations of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union lying behind some mythical iron curtain, and this is what is bedevilling international affairs at the present time. The Labour Government cannot continue to damn the Soviet Union with faint praise at one moment and in the very next breath launch a full-blooded vicious attack against Communism, meaning the Soviet Union, without causing international irritation and suspicion, not only in the Soviet Union, but in the many European countries where the Communist Party is playing a key role in the governments of these nations.

You cannot deny the Soviet Union access to the secrets of atomic energy, remembering the vital part played by the Soviet Union in achieving the victory over fascism and expect this to contribute to international understanding and future peace.

Certain sections of American imperialism are boasting of new rockets that can fly from America to the Urals. They give gruesome details of two new bombs which explode so high in the air that the sound is never heard, but which pollute the air far and wide in that area with germs of two of the most malignant diseases known to mankind. Naturally the peoples are asking who they are to be used against.

When reactionary elements in the U.S.A. unashamedly state their belief that "the wiping out of thirty million Russians would be a small price to pay for the abolition of Communism," thoughtful people in all parts of the world are bound to ask what lies behind it all, and honest Labour supporters find increasing difficulty in justifying this Government's policy of alliance with American imperialism against the Soviet Union.

The concern and anxiety at Bournemouth was well founded. When all the clapping and the applause that the leaders of the Labour Party received there has died away, and sober reflection begins to mature, as the international situation unfolds, it will not be long before we see a mass movement beginning to develop to secure a reversal of the present reactionary policy.

It is this fight for unity of the Big Three which alone can make the United Nations Organisation a success and which can guarantee the future peace of the world, which is the supreme issue before mankind at this moment and above all before the British people.

I do not intend to go into detail about the debate on the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party. The character of the opposition to our affiliation is the natural counterpart of the line in relation to fundamental ownership and foreign policy alike. I think I was the first to coin the phrase that "the honeymoon period of the Labour Government will not last for ever" and I noted that Mr. Morrison used this phrase in the course of his unmeasured and filthy attack on the Communist Party.

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Social Democracy and "democrats" of the Morrison type always direct their full venom, not against capitalism, but always against the revolutionary section of the working-class. It is not the big employers who get the hard knocks, but the Communists who seek by their policy to weaken capitalism, strengthen the working-class and develop strongly in it the will to the conquest of power and Socialism.

The hostility of Social Democracy to Communism always becomes more aggressive and self-confident in times of trade prosperity and boom. It is nothing new we are witnessing at this moment. We saw it in full bloom in 1928, when the whole theory of Social democracy in Germany, France Britain and Czecho-Slovakia, to name only four countries, was advanced to astonishing proportions to endeavour to discredit Communism and extol the "socialist" virtues of American Big Business in particular. "Fordism" had replaced "Marxism"—that was the burden of social democracy's song. In 1929 the bubble was pricked and the whole world, with the exception of the Soviet Union, was launched into the greatest economic crisis ever known.

The defeat of Communist affiliation to the Labour Party is not a blow against the Communist Party, but against the hopes of those who wished to see the Labour Government speedily carry out its full General Election programme as a means of organising peace and prosperity.

It will encourage only the reactionary forces who seek to weaken the power of Labour, prevent the workers from obtaining better conditions and who are preparing for a new war.

Those supporting working-class unity have been faced with a campaign of misrepresentation, intimidation and forgery of documents without parallel in the history of the labour movement. These methods will have a boomerang effect on those who organised them.

The character of the campaig which has had to be organised to pr duce the present decision is proof o how strong is the desire for unit amongst the active workers of th labour movement. They will not fa to note how the most enthusiastic sup porters of Labour leaders opposin unity with the Communists have bee Mr. Churchill, the whole of the cap talist press and the most reactionar elements in America and Europe.

The smug self-satisfied complacenc of the Labour Party leaders will b shattered sooner than is yet realised The illusions will be blasted by in creasing class struggles. The open an concealed enemies of the working class will soon be compelled to fac great exposures. The class issues wi become clearer and more sharpl defined.

The Bournemouth Conference ma have been well timed to open whe Victory Parades were being organised but its results are not going to turn ou to represent victory for the working class in its bitter struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

This is why the decision against Communist affiliation is a blow against the best interests of the workers, nov and in the future.

What will the Communist Party d now? Let me say at once to those wh have so gratuitously given the advic that we should disband the Communis Party, that there is not the slightes possibility of such a retrograde ste being taken. On the contrary, we wi now make the greatest efforts to in crease the influence and membershi of the Communist Party on the basis o its fighting policy against capitalism and for Socialism: a policy which is in the present and future interests of th labour movement and the nation. Th Bournemouth Conference itself wa the most powerful argument against the liquidation of the Communis Party, for if it had been affiliated to the

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Labour Party, the character of the agenda, the discussion, and the decisions would have taken on an entirely different trend, and the platform would not have been able to get away with policies that can only lead to mass unemployment and war.

We will make our full contribution towards solving the emergency position Britain is now in. We will fight against rising prices and profits, for higher wages, shorter hours and more rapid demobilisation, for the success of nationalisation, not by buying the best capitalist brains, but by utilising the power and initiative of the working-class. We will fully support every measure to ensure the successful carrying through of the housing programme, but on the basis of rents the workers can afford to pay.

We will support all measures essential for solving the present food crisis, which received no attention worth mentioning at Bournemouth. But we shall demand relentless war on the Black Market, social justice for the agricultural workers and drastic measures to increase the production of essential foodstuffs in Britain.

We will struggle side by side with the Indian and Egyptian peoples in their struggle for independence and the withdrawal of the British troops from these countries. Similarly, we will demand the withdrawal of British troops from Greece and Indonesia, and an end of British recognition of Franco and trade with Spain.

We will intensify our agitation for the stamping out of all fascist activity in Britain and warn against the dangers of fascist and reactionary activity hiding itself behind the cloak of religion.

We will work unceasingly for a policy of peace and friendship with the Soviet Union and the new democratic Europe, and the ending of a reactionary alliance with Imperialist America, which can endanger Britain's economic position and lead to a new world war.

To those who have attacked our Party, because it is alleged to be pro-Russian, let me say, we are proud to have always fought for friendship with the Soviet Union because we know that this has always been in the best interests of Britain.

We will now immediately organise one of the greatest political campaigns for our policy this country has ever seen, linking it at every stage with a widespread propaganda for the principles of Socialism, and will invite all who agree with our policy to join the Communist Party.

The Bournemouth Conference has taken a serious decision against the unity of the working class, but the issue of unity still remains on the agenda. Time, events, experience, all alike will combine to bring it forward again and again, until the conviction and the determination for its realisation will have triumphed over those reactionary leaders in the Labour Party who are more anxious to secure the preservation of capitalism than the achievement of Socialism.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

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The Elections in Europe

by WILLIAM RUST

THE general elections in France, Italy and Czechoslovakia have consolidated the position of the Communist parties, but they have not registered decisive changes, neither have they given any one party a majority over all others. To continue the work of democratic reconstruction coalition governments will have to be formed in all three countries. The question that remains to be settled, so far as France or Italy is concerned, is whether the balance of power will be in the hands of the working-class parties; the key to the solution is the achievement of Communist-Socialist unity.

These were, of course, no ordinary elections; they could in no way be compared with pre-war elections, which were dominated by the bourgeois parties, which deliberately obscured the basic issues confronting the people. Moreover, each election had a significant bearing on the European situation as a whole and the tense struggle between reaction and democracy which is now developing on a European scale, with Britain and the U.S. closely allied to the reactionary forces.

This significance of the elections was fully understood in the Vatican, which became extremely worried on the eve of the poll in France and Italy and therefore decided to intervene against the Left. The speech delivered by the Pope, Pius 12th, on June 1, amounted to a denunciation of the real democratic parties and an attempt to swing the masses over to the path of reaction. This intervention and the emergence of widely supported Catholic parties, which to a large extent have replaced the old parties of the Right, is a new feature of continental politics which must be seriously noted. Now, more than ever, the Vatican has become a political organising centre of reaction in Europe and it will undoubtedly endeavour to influence the vitally important Polish elections in the autumn.

Reports indicate that the exhortations of the parish priests had a very big effect on peasant women in Italy, whose vote was swung very heavily in favour of the Christian Democrats.

Another outstanding feature of the elections was the viciousness of the anti-Communist campaign. This was markedly the case in France, where there was a line-up between the M.R.P. and the Socialists. It was less marked in Italy, where the unity trend is much stronger among the Socialist leadership and remained only as an undercurrent in Czechoslovakia, where effective unity between the Socialists and Communists scotched the campaign at the outset.

The Economist, which noted this aspect of the elections, described the anti-Communist crusade as being "still the illiberal, reactionary and potential fascist force which it was under Hitler—and still is under Franco. In France and Italy the Catholics fought the elections primarily as anti-Communists and now have behind them the inchoate and in part reactionary following that the cry of anti-Communism usually rallies."

The real meaning of the anti-Communist crusade is correctly noted by *The Economist*, but it would be a mistake to discount the anti-Communism of the Socialist leaders or to regard the followers of the Catholic parties as one reactionary mass.

In France the Socialist leaders were in the forefront of the anti-Communist campaign and they were much more virulent than the M.R.P., which, in fact, largely played the role of taking

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advantage of the ground prepared by the Socialist leaders.

The entire French election was fought as an anti-Communist campaign, but the result was not as anticipated by the campaigners. M.R.P. emerged as the largest party, but the Communist Party actually improved its voting strength, although it lost a few seats. The real losers were the Socialists, who have paid heavily for their wavering and indecision, for attempting to sidle up to reactionary forces while claiming to represent working-class interests.

The results are not without interest to Transport House, which brought heavy pressure on its French colleagues in order to carry through this line. Speaking at the Bournemouth Conference, Leon Blum had occasion to remind his friends of the strength of the Communist parties on the continent and to point out that the results of the elections strongly posed the question of Communist - Socialist fusion in order to secure the setting up of strong governments. Blum found, of course, sufficient reasons against following that course.

This speech of Blum draws attention, however, to what is really the basic significance of the election results, namely, the growth and consolidation of the Communist parties, which, in France, Italy and Czechoslovakia polled a total of over twelve million votes.

The heavy vote recorded for the Communists came as a bitter disappointment to the reactionaries and right-wing Socialist leaders, who had been calculating on the possibility of a conservative swing amongst the masses. It was hoped that the lessons of the fight against the Nazis and quislings and the memories of the Resistance would be somewhat faded one year after the victory and that therefore the Red Bogey, which was such a favourite of Goebbels in the past, could be raised with impunity.

The failure of the anti-Communist campaign will certainly find its reflection in the international situation. Messrs. Byrnes and Bevin will now find themselves confronted with new difficulties in their attempts to set the clock back in Europe, to build up a strong Germany under Anglo-American control, to hold back the new forms of State economy and the progress of the land reforms and to turn Europe into a sphere of influence for American imperialism.

The successes of the Communist parties represent a consolidation of the post-war gains of the workers, peasants and intellectuals and the building of a firm barrier against a return to the abominable conditions of the past which gave birth to fascism and war.

A defeat of the French Communists would probably have meant that France would have been drawn into the Anglo-American orientation, that it would have embraced anti-Soviet policies, weakened its opposition to the pro-Franco policies of London and Washington and renounced its fight against the plans to revive the strength of Germany. In France itself, reaction which is fighting against constitutional change and social progress and endeavouring to re-establish the unchallenged power of the big trusts would have derived great encouragement from such a defeat.

Reaction will, in any case, endeavour to take advantage of the political deadlock which has followed the election.

The de Gaulle speech at Bayeux on June 18, although professing adherence to democracy, was expressive of dictatorial leanings and apparently intended to launch his claims to be the President of France. Around the de Gaulle standard will gather the leaders of reaction in France and also the Paris toughs who carried out the attacks on the Communist Party headquarters.

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Most striking was the victory of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which with 114 seats out of 300, has emerged as the strongest party in the country. With the Social Democrats, the Communists hold a slight majority in the new parliament and the Communist leader, Klement Gottwald, has taken over the premiership.

This result means that Czechoslovakia, occupying as it does a key strategical position in Europe and widely regarded as a link between East and West, is firmly on the side of democracy and a progressive solution of the problems confronting Europe. Czechoslovakia voted, in fact, against Bevin and Byrnes.

The reasons for the Left victory in Czechoslovakia are to be traced to the strength of Socialist-Communist unity (between the two parties there exists an excellent co-operation), the splendid constructive work carried on by the Communist Party since the May Revolution and the deep rooted belief of the masses that their future is closely bound up with the Soviet Union, for which they have a great love and admiration.

Anti-Soviet propaganda and the contrasting of the advantages of Western democracy over "Eastern totalitarianism" fall on deaf ears in Czechoslovakia. Such talk cannot wipe out the memories of the Munich betrayal by the Western powers, nor the knowledge that the decisive role in the liberation of Czechoslovakia was played by the Red Army.

The results of the election and referendum on the monarchy in Italy are of extraordinary interest because of the conflicting political currents in a country which has so recently emerged from a fascist dictatorship and which had not gone to the polls for twenty-five years.

The House of Savoy has at long last got its marching orders and the Italian Republic is now definitely established.

The final figures show that the Republic received 12,717,923 votes and the Monarchy 10,719,284. Nearly 90 per cent. of the electorate went to the poll. This enthusiastic participation of the electorate was a feature of the elections in all three countries, in significant contrast to Greece.

But Umberto's resistance and the bloody demonstrations organised by the Monarchists are a warning as to the strength which fascism possesses and of the encouragement which it derived from the ten million votes cast for the monarchy. Italy's forward march to democracy may not be a smooth one.

Reaction has drawn its chief strength from the backward South, where the peasantry are still under the influence of the ideology of the old regime. But big political changes are developing in the South, which, helped by the Republican North, with its stronger industrial basis, will finally be able to shake itself free from backward influences.

The election results are inconclusive. Neither the Christian Democrats, who are the largest party, nor the Communists and Socialists combined, who hold about 40 per cent. of the votes, are able to form a Government. A wide coalition is therefore inevitable and it will be the task of the three largest parties to reach understanding for this purpose. Together they command 426 seats as compared to the 90 seats which have been obtained by the parties of the Right.

Significant among these is the Uomo Qualunque, or Party of the Common Man, a distinctly fascist type of organisation which gained 30 seats.

The Communist vote, 4,204,000 and 104 seats, although some 400,000 less than the Socialist vote, fully establishes the Communist Party as a leading political force in Italy and it will certainly occupy key positions in the new Government.

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It does not appear, on the basis of the present relationship of the parties, that a period of stable government can be expected in either France or Italy. Neither is it certain that the two large Catholic parties, the Christian Democrats in Italy and the M.R.P. in France, will pursue a steady democratic course.

Czechoslovakia is an exception to this forecast, because that country is much more economically and politically stable than France or Italy and the leadership of the Government is in the hands of the Communists and Socialists, who are bound together by a close understanding. Moreover, all parties are pledged to joint working and to a common programme.

But the Slovakia end of Czechoslovakia presents a problem. Catholic influence is very strong and the Slovak Democratic Party, which obtained a sweeping majority, has provided a home for quite a large number of fascists. There have been various incidents in Slovakia since the election and the Ministry of the Interior has revealed that 100,000 former organised fascists were enabled by the Democratic Party to vote at the election in spite of the laws to the contrary.

Although the open parties of the Right have made a definite bid for support in both France and Italy and have won a number of parliamentary seats, they do not represent a powerful influence. In France, the P.R.L., the new Conservative Party, which obtained 15.2 per cent. of the votes in 1945, dropped to 12.77 per cent. in 1946. The lost votes probably went to the M.R.P.

This isolation of the open Right is basically due to the democratic upheaval and the historical exposure of the role of these parties, from whose leading ranks came the fascists and quislings. But it is also necessary to take into account the extent to which the reactionary forces in the town and countryside have consciously transferred their support to the Catholic parties and are endeavouring to use them for their own ends. This is being done with the support of the Vatican, which is entirely out of sympathy with the democratic aspirations of the masses who have been attracted to the side of the Catholic parties.

The new Catholic parties represent, in part, the efforts of reaction to find a suitable cloak. On the other hand, they express the desire of large sections of the working-people, chiefly the petty-bourgeoisie, to find a halfway house between the discredited policies of the past and the democratic road of today which has been pioneered by the Communists.

In France, for example, there is an obvious contradiction between the Resistance tradition of the M.R.P. rank and file and the manoeuvres of the leadership to prepare a come-back for de Gaulle and to set up an authoritarian regime. In Italy, the Christian Democrats by no means represent an homogeneous organisation; the party is avowedly Catholic, but it decided to vote for the republic and despite the pressure of the church, the majority of the party's followers carried out this decision.

To sum up. The results of the elections in these three countries confirm the trend of the working-class towards the Communist Party and also show that important sections of the peasantry are following the same road. In France, the position of the Socialist Party has been weakened chiefly because of its opposition to working-class unity and its attempts at association with the M.R.P. against the Communists. At the same time the Catholic parties have become an important force through which reaction is steadily operating. The continuation of the divisions within the working-class

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is the chief obstacle to the establishment of stable governments, which are so essential to fulfil the urgent tasks of economic and social reconstruction.

But the political changes are so vast that there can be no going back to the old Europe. Bevin and Byrnes may take heart from the still existing strength of reaction, but their policies find no echo among the masses of the workers, middle classes and peasantry who are striving to build a new democratic economy and to end for ever the power of the monopolists, big landowners and monarchists.

Cotton Working Party

by WILLIAM BOLTON

THE Report of the Cotton Working Party is the second in the series. The Pottieries stole a march on Lancashire with a trivial document that demonstrated their belief that the alternative to nationalisation is still unrestricted private enterprise. It recommended no more specific action by the Government than a statutory minimum wage, a compulsory levy to finance co-operative research and an Advisory Board without executive powers. Here is one industry which is clearly not yet convinced that the Labour Government means business. If this Report were a model for all the rest, the failure of Sir Stafford Cripps's device for planning the efficient conduct of capitalist production "on Labour's terms" would be certain.

The Cotton Working Party is the most important of all, and it is a relief to find that at least it does not attempt to condone the selfish improvidence of the cotton masters over the past thirty years. Faced with the competition of new and efficient textile industries after the last war, they postponed over and over again the re-equipment and reorganisation necessary to meet it . . .

The writing on the wall was not read (textile machinery exports alone should have made it plain) and things were done in blindness to realities. The immediate post-war scramble gave the chance for high prices and profits. The profits were used, not for strengthening the industry to meet the new competitive conditions, but mainly to pay high dividends to support share gambles. (An examination of 150 companies shows that the average paid by dividend-paying firms in 1920 was 40.2 per cent. *

The result in terms of short-time, unemployment and misery for millworkers is too clear in the memories of the labour movement to need rehearsing. By 1938, when the rest of the country was recovered from the effects of the world crisis and already feeling those of the re-armament boom, cotton production had fallen to one-half of its peak level and nearly half of its workers had left the industry. Many more were released to munitions and the services during concentration and show no eagerness to return to cotton, after the enormously better wages and conditions they have enjoyed in their wartime jobs. There is little likelihood that the total labour force in the industry will amount in the near future to much more than 250,000—65 per cent. of the pre-war complement for the same physical capacity. Hence the paradox of surplus capacity side by side with a serious deficit in production even for home requirements—with no allowance for the part a major exporting industry should be playing

* Chapter 1 of the Working Party's Report; p. 5.

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in achieving a 50 per cent. increase on 1939 total exports.

The Working Party recognises that the shortage of labour is the crucial factor today; and that it can only be met by wages and conditions good enough to compete with other industries, and by complete reorganisation of British mill practice, on the lines suggested by the Platt Mission, to make the best use of the existing labour force. Lancashire mills have traditionally taken advantage of the large cheap and highly-skilled labour force to drag the last ounce out of "written down" obsolete machinery; now they must follow the American example and use up-to-date methods, high-draft spinning equipment and automatic looms, to increase productivity and lessen the strain on the workers. Short runs must be replaced by bulk production.

The Working Party recommends an immediate survey of existing plant, and an independent enquiry into the position of the textile machinery industry, as the basis for drawing up an "ordered plan" of re-equipment over the next few years; and the Government have already accepted these suggestions as non-controversial. Investigation of the textile engineers is long overdue; highly monopolised, especially in the spinning machinery sections, the industry has a bad record of technical backwardness and high prices. Its capacity is now very small, and the Government must be prepared to use importation and if necessary—in the interests of future cotton exports—control of exports to ensure an adequate flow of equipment for the home industry.

On the practical measures of re-equipment the Working Party is completely split; and the chairman, trade union members and one employer are to be congratulated on producing, in the face of bitter opposition from the other three employers and three independent members (*who issue a Minority Report) a serious and on the whole workable scheme. An *ad hoc* Equipment Board would direct a programme of compulsory re-equipment, financed in part by a levy on all firms (based on their capacity and largely passed on to the consumer by an increase in the controlled prices of cloth) and the remainder by cheap loans through the Government's industrial finance corporations. Grouping or amalgamations of the smaller units would be enforced after three months' opportunity for voluntary arrangements; and the larger units so formed would be responsible for identifying inefficient plant for scrapping and planning the re-equipment of the rest. As a special measure to remedy unbalanced redundancy, 12½ per cent. of existing spindles would be immobilised. The gravest doubt is whether the scale of the re-equipment provided for is large enough.

Like their 1918 counterparts, the cotton employers have no doubt been looking forward to a post-war period of high profits and a compulsory scheme looks like denying it to them. Admitting the need for substantial re-equipment, they have the effrontery in their minority report to suggest that the Government shall provide the money, but leave the employer to decide how it is to be used. They argue persistently that the employer is the only man who can tell when re-equipment is necessary or when larger units are required; and they reject the theory that continued labour shortage demands the concentration of production in the most efficient units. They

* Memorandum of Dissent on Certain Matters, signed by :—

C. B. Clegg, A. V. Symons, W. M. Wiggins } Employers.

Prof. E. L. Hirst, Prof. T. Jewkes, Miss. A. G. Shaw } Independent members.

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are affronted by the proposal of a compulsory levy and suggest as an alternative the removal of price-control from export goods; as it is very rarely possible to sort out production at the yarn or cloth stage into home and export orders, when much of it will finally be exported as made-up goods, they presumably hope to use this as a lever to force the complete removal of price-control.

It is significant that the employers have obtained the support of three "independent" members for their impassioned defence of capitalist freedom. This should furnish an object-lesson to Labour Ministers. Too many members of this Government's Boards and commissions have already been appointed as "impartial" experts, when really they are the most die-hard apologists of capitalism. If the Labour Government believes in its own economic programme, let it appoint technicians and economists who believe in it too, and not those who happen to be most "respectable" in the eyes of the City or Wall Street.

The majority scheme is itself too generous to the employers. In the national interest the industry has to be helped to get out of the mess the employers have created; but the burden should not be entirely shouldered by the consumer and the taxpayer. The Working Party recommends elsewhere measures for improving the efficiency of distribution and cutting its costs (it quotes the case of sheets selling at 22s. 5½d. retail, in which the wholesaler and retailer charges amount to 8s. 2d.) and some inducement might be provided if the controlled retail prices were left unchanged and the cost of the levy had to be shared by the industry and its merchant-converters, wholesalers and retailers. When mills are scrapped, too, the newer ones must not be prevented from operating cheaply by an oppressive burden of fixed charges; compensation should be paid in a share of the ordinary capital of the operating firms.

It was outside its terms of reference to make detailed recommendations concerning wages and conditions, but the Working Party could not escape the necessity of pointing to higher wages as the essential of new recruitment, and recommending an immediate enquiry on the lines of the Evershed Commission for all other sections of the trade. They stress, too, that higher wages are the strongest incentive to instal new machinery. At the same time, the employers made a spirited attempt to link this improvement with a repressive national wages policy; in fact, they ask, as the trade union members pointed out, "for complete *laissez faire* for the employers, but want a national policy to regulate wages."

The Working Party emphasises the need for more efficient management and for co-operative effort between workers and employers in solving production problems, and recommends the employment of younger men with technical and scientific training and the establishment of a Lancashire administrative staff college which will undoubtedly give opportunities of promotion to individual operatives with special technical and managerial gifts. At the national level it proposes a tripartite Cotton Council on which the trade union representatives will play their part in administering the earlier proposals. But it ignores altogether the possibility of bringing into consultation within the individual factory the workers as a group. The lesson of the Joint Production Committees can be applied here. Lancashire millowners boast of the skill of their operatives; this is the chance to draw on their enormous fund of practical training and experience in the selection of plant for mechanisation, the replanning of mill lay-outs, and so on. Joint com-

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ittees of workers and managements within the individual mills should be responsible for executing the policy of the Cotton Council.

The Report makes other important recommendations which are unlikely to be contested—increased facilities for fundamental and applied research and the exchange of results, the establishment of a Central Factory company under tripartite management to manage experimental mills, a Central Marketing company to conduct research into problems of distribution and consumer needs, and a successor to British Overseas Cottons Ltd. for bulking export orders. All these are necessary reforms, but the crucial issues, and those which will be most stubbornly fought, are those of re-equipment and control.

The trade union representatives have shown a statesmanlike approach to the problem. While stating their belief in socialisation as the only final solution, they have given their wholehearted support to these recommendations in the hope of getting co-operative action by all parties on an immediate programme. But they say flatly that they are not prepared to make unilateral sacrifices, which will be without avail unless the employers co-operate, and if this attitude is maintained they will press for nationalisation. The Government should take an early decision to implement the basic recommendations of the Report, and make it clear once and for all to the employers that if they do not co-operate willingly they will be compelled to do so. Capitalists in the cotton industry must not be allowed to sabotage this eleventh-hour opportunity.

Bombay

by R. PALME DUTT

(We print here as a special article the description of Bombay from the 18th-24th April Travel Notes—Ed. L.M.)

DURING the Easter recess, while the Cabinet Mission departed to fish for trout and shoot wild duck in the cool heights of Kashmir, I took the opportunity to visit the crowded industrial centres of Bombay. It was an inspiring experience. Here I was able to meet some of the outstanding trade union and working-class leaders of India and to visit the Communist Party Headquarters, where 120 full-time workers live, work, eat and sleep in the more than Spartan simplicity of their "Commune." Over the building, as over the Party headquarters in every town of India, flies the Red Flag as over a fortress (in Calcutta the flag flies high over the great building of the provincial headquarters and across the roofs faces the Union Jack of the Governor's castle with Burrows inside). Following the recent hooligan assaults and wholesale damage, the building is specially guarded day and night, and all comrades are organised to be ready in case of need for defence duties.

The warmth of the response from Party, trade unions, working-class and general public quarters, and of the greetings to the English movement, would defy description.

I visited the working-class quarters in the heart of Parel, the Red Fortress of Bombay which had just triumphantly returned our friend Dange to the Legislative Assembly in the face of an unexampled campaign of intimidation, corruption, bogus voting and violence, including the murder of one

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Party worker. On the roof of the provincial headquarters I had an unforgettable meeting of welcome with 1,500 workers crowded on every inch of space, and as large an overflow meeting outside. They gave me a wonderful display of their songs. These songs are turned out on every current topic (sure enough, as soon as I arrived a new song was composed in my honour with the chorus thundering out the unmanageable syllables of my name and somehow turning them into melody). I wish space would permit me to give the text of some of these songs, which were translated for me; they are simple, lively mass agitation, full of humour and vigour, with a catching refrain. Half the mass propaganda, Joshi told me, is done by these songs. Their effect is so powerful that when a team of seven singers visited the Central Provinces for the election campaign, the only thing the authorities could find to do to counteract this was to arrest the whole team for a dacoity (robbery with violence) committed a hundred miles away.

One evening I spent in the homes of the workers, at a time when they had got back from the factories. The housing conditions of Bombay have won an unenviable notoriety throughout the world. There is no improvement today. On the contrary, as the population has doubled during the war and now stands at 3½ millions, the overcrowding has grown much worse. On the evening of my visit, Easter Sunday evening, it was the feast of Hanuman, the monkey-god, and the streets were full of music and dancing. As we drove down the great broad artery which drives in a straight line right through Parel (rather like the Commercial Road) with brilliantly lit stores and shops on either side, the way was almost impassable with the thronging crowds, the decorated flower-strewn cars of the god, the music of drums and all kinds of instruments, and the sudden surges of the mass dancing across the whole breadth of the street. Lines of dancers, men and women, faced one another and swung backwards and forwards in a kind of "Knees Up, Mother Brown" performance. We turned down a side street, where the lights were less and the singing and dancing quieter. We turned again and came to the unlit region of the chawls, the homes of the factory workers.

The chawls are lines of rudely built single-room huts set back to back in close rows. Each is about 12 ft. by 10 ft., with an uneven earth floor, with no window or ventilation. The darkness inside is only pierced sometimes by a guttering oil wick, while there is an oppressive heat from the tiny stoves and cooking on the ground. In each of these tiny sheds whole families live, eat, sleep, cook, and go through all the processes of life, of birth, sickness and death in these few feet of space. The occupants of the first hut I visited numbered ten; they paid Rs. 7 per month as rent for this wretched home. In the next there were no less than 13 tiny stoves or primitive means of cooking, indicating 13 households; my guide pointed out that this would mean at least 20 people living here, but the occupants feared to give the exact number lest their rent should be raised.

The first set of chawls I visited consisted of three rows of ten. For these thirty huts, representing about 300 persons, there were three taps in all, available with water only during the morning and evening hours coming in a slow trickle. There were three lavatories in all—holes in the ground directly over the drain; one was overflowing and unusable. The next set of eight chawls comprised 160 of these single-room huts. For these 1,600 people there were six taps in all with water only running from 6 to 8 in the evening and 2 to 7.30 in

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the morning, although in the well-to-do quarters of Bombay, the water is available all day. One solidly built small building was set apart, brilliantly lit with electric light and well-equipped with furniture. This was the rent-collector's office. Thus electricity was, in fact, laid on, but none is available for the people. These chawls were mostly thirty-five years old and untouched since they were built. The landlord does nothing but take the rents. The municipal regulations are of the most elementary, sketchy description, and are seldom enforced; the inspectors, corporation and landlords all work together; even if there is a prosecution it only results in nominal fines of a few rupees. Yet in the midst of these grim conditions, the spirit of the workers is unbroken. These chawls are a Party stronghold, and Red Flags fly from the huts, despite all attempts of the landlords' agents to bring them down.

When I had seen the chawls I thought I had seen the bottom level, but there was worse to come. We next visited the Matunga Labour Camp, or sweepers' colony beyond the outskirts of the city. There was here a series of municipal huts built for sweepers and outcasts. Far beyond the relatively small number of municipal huts stretched a mass of crude huts and tents built by the occupants themselves on the waste ground. These were the most ramshackle constructions of bamboo, straw, rags and brown paper. With the most constricted interior space the uneven earthen floor was broken by holes and tunnels of rats. The space between the huts were barely two yards, in some cases one yard wide. Rats and vermin swarmed. There had recently been three cholera deaths here. Mosquitoes fill the air. There was a "shop" on the bare ground with tiny fragments of rotten dry fish. At one spot a drain had broken open and overflowed: the spot seethed with crawling life. There were about a thousand huts with an average of ten people in each; for all these there were only thirty-two taps, or one for 300 persons. Even the outside verandahs of a few boards with a low covering were often occupied. In one space little more than a kennel 4 ft. by 2 ft. I saw a family crouched, a sick old woman on the ground moaning and coughing, two children huddled beside her and an old man behind. Yet even here in this nightmare inferno of human misery, where no Congress or League representative dares enter, the Red Flag proclaims its hope and defiance and the task of organisation has been begun; there is a Party group of 25; we were given a tremendous reception, old men and women and tiny children raised the clenched fist and we were shown with pride one entire hut which was the hut of the friends of the Soviet Union, with an aged man in charge, and portraits of Lenin and Stalin and a garland within.

Darkness was complete as we left; and we had only a weak lantern to pick our way through the narrow paths between the rows of huts, amid the pools and pitfalls and human bodies; but a hundred willing hands and arms guided our footsteps. The memory of the Matunga labour camp will remain with me to my dying day: and with it, this feeling above all: hatred of the system that has done this to human life; and honour for those who, living under such conditions, have not gone under, and have carried forward human struggle and comradeship and the fight for the future.

On the last evening I met the management committee of the famous Girni Kamgar Union. There are 7 members on the managing committ and they gave a splendid effect strength, competence and confider The name of Ben Bradley is a nam conjure with among them. They

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questions at me and I fired questions at them. The Bombay millowners still refuse to recognise unions, and the elementary basis of collective bargaining is lacking. From this meeting I was able to learn much on wages and conditions and on present trade union problems, including the new problems caused by the attempted invasion of the political divisions into the trade union field. At the end of the evening a dozen from among them stood before me and asked me to pick out which were Hindus, Muslims or Scheduled Caste. To their delight, my guesses were all wrong.

Travel Notes No. 3

by R. PALME DUTT

April 26.

Returning to Delhi, I experienced the fallibility of journalism in endeavouring to report this Cabinet Mission. Just before leaving Bombay, having been concerned for five days in other activities, I felt a twinge of conscience for my newspaper and the reporting of the Mission, and hastily put together a cable from my inner consciousness on what I judged might be the situation. Thereupon I proceeded to Delhi hoping to learn the real situation. When I opened my newspapers in Delhi next morning I found on the front page my own Bombay cable, re-cabled at length back from London as the inside story of the situation in Delhi. This considerably disillusioned me with regard to news of the Cabinet Mission negotiations.

April 30 *to May* 4.

I have taken advantage of another interruption in the negotiations to make a short visit to Calcutta. Calcutta is in many respects a contrast to Bombay. Bombay is the most modern city in India and gives very much the effect of an Indian city run by Indians with Europeans in the background. Calcutta gives the reverse effect. Here the old Clive Street mentality rules. The sense of colonial domination and of sharp division of the ruling race and the ruled is far more marked and glaringly offensive than elsewhere. This fact is intensified by the large numbers of overseas soldiers in the streets. Statues and monuments and memorials of imperialism face you at every turn in the main streets, including the monstrous Victoria Memorial, a kind of cheap picture postcard imitation of the Taj Mahal.

The town is much shabbier than Bombay and the poverty more glaring. The rickshaws, with a weak, undersized coolie dragging two healthy, fat clients, added to the sense of repulsion. I had seen none in Delhi or Bombay. Overcrowding in Calcutta is no less marked than in Bombay; the population here has trebled during the war to 4½ millions. In the bustees, or working-class quarters, the sanitary conditions are worse than in Bombay, the close lines run with an open drain between. Taps average one to five or six hundred; in one case there were five taps for 8,000 people.

Although the intense political divisions have greatly weakened Bengal, the organisation of the working-class and of the Communist Party is impressive. On the evening of my arrival I was invited to a reception meeting of *selected* English-speaking Party members and sympathisers. Expecting a meeting of two or three hundred, I asked how many would be there. They replied about 5,000; and when I got to the meeting there were 7,000-8,000 there. Other meetings were on a similar scale. The Calcutta Party runs

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its own daily newspaper, which occupies the ground floor of the great block of the provincial headquarters building. When I asked the provincial secretary how many full-time workers they had for Bengal he replied, about a thousand. For Calcutta there were seventy. I visited a unique institution, the Red Aid hospital, splendidly run, with two full-time doctors and sixteen beds, where the victims of the election hooliganism were being cared for. He showed me with pride the microscope which had been presented by the Socialist Medical Association. This institution deserves help.

I was able to meet many leading personalities in Calcutta and draw from them very interesting impressions of the peculiar situation in Bengal. The few days that I spent there, in fact, were very crowded. Everywhere there was a truly regal hospitality and reception, with good reporting in the press.

At the central May Day rally under the auspices of the Bengal TUC, I was happy to be able to bring greetings from Britain. It is illustrative of the extreme sectional divisions in Bengal that this was almost prevented at the last moment owing to objection being raised by the Congress Socialist minority on the TUC Council, while the militant majority had acquiesced in the objection in the interests of unity. Without wishing to interfere in these internal divisions, I felt that this might create an unfortunate impression in England and therefore asked to meet the President and Congress Socialist leaders. They explained to me that they had, of course, no objection to my taking part, but feared that it would result in uncontrollable hooliganism and stone-throwing, which I might regard as lack of hospitality to myself. I replied that if that was all their worry, I would take the risk, because there would be no hooliganism or stone-throwing if the leaders were united, since hooliganism always arises from above and never from below. There was, of course, no disturbance of any kind and at the end of my speech, in which I kept entirely to the theme of unity, the Congress Socialist leaders rushed up to shake me by the hand.

May 5.

The plane from Calcutta failed to run for two days after the storm, and as a result I was delayed in getting to Simla, whither the conference had moved in the meantime. Now I write from the 6,500 ft. heights of Simla, with the white peaks of the Himalayas visible beyond.

May 7.

Simla is even more fantastically unreal as a centre of government than New Delhi. New Delhi is sufficiently remote from the life of India, but sometimes that life seeps into its elegant avenues, as the following police court incident illustrates:—

> Over 20 destitutes, consisting entirely of women and children, were rounded up last night by the New Delhi police in front of the India Coffee House. They were taken to a police station and produced before the Resident Magistrate last morning. The police produced these destitutes before the Resident Magistrate because they considered *the Imperial Capital should not be bothered by the sight of destitutes*. Orders were passed restraining destitutes from coming into New Delhi. All destitutes from South India are now to be found near the Old Delhi railway station.

But Simla, at its height of six and a half thousand feet, is able to view the travails of India with Olympian detachment. The world of Scandal Point and the Mall has no truck with the world of the Lower Bazaar.

As a health resort, with its clear air, its villa-covered heights and wooded valleys, Simla might have its virtues. On a full, clear day it is possible to see every peak brilliantly outlined of the eternal snows of the Himalayas. But as

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a practical centre of government it is less advantageous. Every office and every official's residence is at the top of a height with a great descent and ascent between. Transport over the infuriating distances of New Delhi was bad enough, with practically no public transport and rare taxis at wild charges. But after Simla I take back all my abuse of New Delhi. New Delhi anyway has the little tongas or pony carts. But in Simla no cars at all are allowed except the Viceroy's car and the cars of the Maharajas. When the Simla Transport Car brings travellers here along the 50 miles' winding ascent from Kalka station, it has to stop on the main road outside. For the remaining ascent the luggage is taken up on the backs of coolies. Doubled up, the coolies carry on their backs everything that has to be carried, the most incredible loads; great chests and wardrobes and articles of furniture and crates and office files, all go up the steep ascent on the backs of coolies. For moving about in this lordly atmosphere the visitor is supposed to ride a horse or walk if he is unwilling to take a human-drawn rickshaw carried along at a trotting pace by four lusty hillmen. The sight of the rickshaws is not so immediately terrible as in Calcutta, where an undernourished and under-sized coolie can be seen dragging along two healthy, fat young passengers; here there are four men to a rickshaw; but the ascents are murderous and it said that the life of these rickshaw coolies does not last more than a few years.

May 9.

The first full-length film of the Indian People's Theatre Association, "Dharti-ke-Lal," or "Children of the Earth," has been given its world premiere here in Simla for an audience of the journalists attached to the Mission and others. I had had the opportunity of having a preview earlier in Bombay. The film runs for two hours and will stand comparison with the American "Grapes of Wrath." Its theme is the story of a Bengal village; and unforgettable scenes are given of the Bengal famine, the death-trek to Calcutta and poignant scenes in Calcutta of the starving peasants against the cruel cold masonry of the imperial and financial buildings. The story ends with the vision of a new village free from the moneylenders and landlords and the beginning of a collective farm. In the production of this film thousands of peasants have voluntarily taken part. The production of this eleven thousand feet film cost 100,000 rupees, or £7,500. Already it has been sold for circuit in India for three times this sum, so that there is capital in hand for more film production. The censorship represented an obstacle to be overcome: but when on the insistence of the police inspector the entire Board of Censors attended to see the film, by the end they broke down and were wiping tears from their eyes. The special show in Simla was a great success and the English and American journalists were genuinely impressed.

May 10.

The protracted course of the Simla negotiations is turning all my timetable upside down. In my original plan, counting on the usual rate of negotiations, I had arranged at intervals to slip away for a few days to visit other parts of India, and was now due for a visit to Lahore in the Punjab and also to Kashmir, where I had been invited by Sheikh Abdulla, the leader of the Kashmir People's National Conference. All this had to be postponed. Perhaps it is as well that my visit to Sheikh Abdulla did not take place on the date fixed; for within a few days after the date fixed for my departure there followed the military terror-coup in Kashmir, the Maharaja and Premier Kak arresting Sheikh Abdulla and the leaders of the People's Conference, with shooting and killing of the people

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in the streets. Had my visit taken place a few days before, no doubt the usual tittle-tattle in the Indian press which seeks to follow my inconspicuous movements and sayings with sinister interpretations, would have found a new clue for the crisis in Kashmir. But I was sorry to miss the visit to Sheikh Abdulla, who impressed me as the most courageous and outstanding representative of the States peoples. His crime was that he launched a campaign against the Treaty of Amritsar by which the Kashmir people are held in bondage. This treaty is a striking exposure of the supposed ancient and immemorial claims of the Princes; for, in fact, the East India Company sold the land and people of Kashmir to the present Dogra House for 75 lakhs of Sikh rupees, or less than half a million pounds—a singular example of successful trading principles by which you sell what is not yours to someone who has no right to it. By this sale deed since 1846 the people of Kashmir are held enslaved.

May 11.

Some of the palatial residences of Simla in the more commanding positions enjoy a wide view. I discovered this when I was invited to lunch with Sir Maharaj Singh, an old Liberal and supporter of the Friends of the Soviet Union, who occupies a villa on one of the highest points at the top of Summer Hill commanding a view over the whole of Simla. Through a telescope in the glass verandah which runs along the whole length of the upper story like a ship's deck, it is possible to look down on and into every room of the Viceregal Lodge, of "Yarrows," where Mr. Jinnah is staying, or the "Retreat," where are Nehru and Azad. Had I known this earlier this might have facilitated the labours of the journalists who have been exerting themselves to obtain a peepshow view of the negotiations and conferences in those residences. At this lunch were present a variety of Rajas, Nawabs and potentates of the old school; one of them, when the conversation inevitably turned to Russia, recalled that he also had been to Russia. His last visit was in 1898 and his memories were of the good times he had had in the Winter Palace and Tsarskoye Selo. He agreed that much had probably changed since then.

May 12.

At last the inevitable breakdown of the Simla negotiations has been announced. For days on end the corpse has been kept in suspended animation amongst universal predictions of its impending decease. The Associated Press of India, understood to be in close touch with Patel, made a scoop by announcing the final breakdown twenty-four hours before the official announcement. So everything proceeds according to plan, and the predicted tactical line of the Mission pursues its course. After final demonstration of the inability of the Congress and the League to agree, with the heightened theatrical effect by the retreat to Simla, the way is prepared for the British Government to make its award. For this we return to Delhi.

May 14.

Back in Delhi, I took the opportunity, while awaiting the return of the Mission, to visit the famous Red Fort, the old seat of the Moghul Emperors, the centre of the fighting of 1857, and now more recently the ill-chosen scene of the imprisonment and trial of leading I.N.A. officers. The spectacle of looting and destruction of what must have been at its height in the 17th century the most magnificent palace ever constructed, is overpowering. The infinite jewelled ornamentation can only be imagined from the countless holes from which the jewels have been torn. Like Cromwell stabling his horses in King's College

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chapel, British military fury and revenge after 1857 turned the most precious monuments of architecture into barracks, and chambers of delicate carving became the sergeants' mess and kitchen, and are still covered with soot and grime. The elaborately-designed gardens and fountains, with their intricate pipes and 700 jets to play among coloured streams of water became a jungle. Only since Curzon the work of restoration began; and it was only two years ago that the removal of the cheap yellow distemper flung over the walls in the main gateway have revealed the most beautiful paintings and frescoes underneath. The Peacock Throne is gone and the River of Paradise no longer flows past it over the cunningly wrought channels of gold and silver and mother-of-pearl with jewelled gold fish, to reach the final climax of splendour in the hall of the Peacock Throne with the attendant thrones of the lesser Monarchs, and the inscription running around the walls, "If Paradise there be on Earth, It is Here, It is Here." What still remains and cannot be removed is the beautiful inlaid stone work, a marvel of craftsmanship, with the most delicate representations of many-coloured birds and flowers entirely set in different precious stones. The bathrooms would drive a New York millionaire or a Hollywood film-star green with envy, with the spacious separate chambers for the hot bath, the cold bath, the steam bath, the head wash and the children's bath: each with its series of jets of water rising upwards and in the midst of each the central jet of rose-water. How was all this intricate pipe system worked without mechanical engineering? Down in the depths of the maze of pipes hundreds of coolies pumped by hand. The Queen's Chamber remains, with its ceiling of crystal glittering like a canopy of stars and offering a thousand reflections from every angle. Along the one unfortified side of the Fort the Jumna river flows, and the balcony for the *darshan* or the public showing looks over it where at sunrise each morning the Emperor had to stand and show the world that he was still alive, and then step back from this balcony to the inner-chamber to meet the warning inscription before his eyes:—

O, Thou who hast fetters on thy legs and a padlock on thy heart, Beware! And O, Thou whose eye-lids are sewn up and whose feet are deep in the mire, Beware! Thou art bound towards the West but thou hast turned thy face to the East. O Traveller, thou hast turned thy back on thy destination, Beware!

If the Emperor had been my height he would not have needed that warning inscription; for the doorway from the balcony to the inner-chamber is about 5 feet 10 inches, and a hasty turnabout from the sunshine of the balcony to the inner-chamber through that doorway would have ensured an automatic daily reminder that he was but mortal.

The Red Fort, even in ruins, remains an impressive memory of the power and splendour of the Moghul Emperors, and it is not surprising that the European travellers of the 17th century should have been impressed by the wealth and artistic development revealed. There is still much that can be done to restore the old proportions and check the ruin and decay, and it may be that when the commercial uses of gold and silver are abandoned, it would be worthwhile to use a portion of the world stocks of gold and silver to restore the glory of the Red Fort.

It will be noticed that we have changed the cover of the magazine and hope that you will appreciate its effectiveness and neatness.

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Labour Monthly 25th Anniversary Greetings

We print below a selection from the many messages sent to us from old contributors or from sister journals throughout the world—Ed. L.M.

Alex Gossip.

"Hearty congratulations on your 25th Anniversary, during which the MONTHLY has done yeoman service to the *real* labour movement."

Arthur Horner, President of National Union of Mineworkers (South Wales Area Council).

"The LABOUR MONTHLY magazine, though small in eye, has exercised a considerable influence in the affairs of the British working-class movement. It has been the stores from which Branch officials have drawn the equipment to assist them in their daily role of representing the members' interests, at the same time providing them with ammunition to dispose of the arguments of forces seeking to oppose those interests.

"It has helped to train working-class representatives to become objective when confronted by problems, to see tomorrow as well as today, in short, to acquire the ability to make correct judgments of situations and their future tendencies, and to work according to a peace in the direction of a clear and single perspective, regardless of setbacks and difficulties. Its contribution to an understanding of international events over a long period of years has been greater than that of any English language publication, namely, because of the unchallenged work of R. P. Dutt, the present Editor, in my opinion, one of the outstanding scientific Socialists of our time."

Will Lawther, President of National Union of Mineworkers.

"Congratulations on reaching the first quarter of a century. In that period the LABOUR MONTHLY has helped towards the remarkable progress the world's workers have reached in their march towards a classless society. The miners remember with gratitude the part it played in our dark days, and we do not forget our friends. The next few years will be a testing period, and it is essential that the point of view should have full scope, that it will be the organised workers who will provide the atomic energy to give the world peace, health and happiness for the world's workers.

"May you continue in that task is the wish of—WILL LAWTHER."

Andrew Naesmith, Amalgamated Weavers' Association.

"Greetings on your twenty-fifth birthday, and to all those associated with the publication of the LABOUR MONTHLY. The magazine has served a useful purpose in propaganda, education, and cultural pursuits.

"It is invariably explicit in its policy and brings before the minds of its readers provocative ideas. As such it has stimulated and played no small part in developing a class-conscious spirit amongst all who wish well of our country."

D. N. Pritt, K.C., M.P.

"I send you all good wishes for the 25th anniversary of LABOUR MONTHLY. The part which it has played in the political education of many thousands of people in the British labour movement is indisputable and it has had to overcome great difficulties during the war years and continued to give a lead in Marxist interpretation of current events.

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"I sincerely hope that in the next twenty-five years of its existence it will continue to improve in quality and quantity and take its place as the most important political journal in the British labour movement."

George Bernard Shaw.

"I subscribe faithfully to the L.M.; but I never read it. I cannot read books or articles on Socialism: I know too much about it; and the writers mostly know too little.

"I have wondered how you kept it going and am astonished (and delighted) to learn that you have 20,000 circulation and can count on 50,000 when you can get paper enough.

"But don't ask me to write about it. I'd rather die. Very likely I shall."

Harry Adams, President of Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers of Great Britain and Ireland.

"As a Marxist of many years' standing I have been impressed by the clear and peerless presentation of international affairs, analysis of problems as they have arisen and the lead given to those who are interested in shaping the destiny of the peoples in this and other countries.

"The peculiar problems that have arisen as a result of six years of warfare and the tremendous effect made upon all people by the manner in which these problems are settled make it necessary for those who are interested in the development of a progressive policy, including the closest friendship with the U.S.S.R., to give more support to LABOUR MONTHLY by increasing its circulation and influence.

W. H. Hutchinson.

"Since the first issue I have been keenly interested and continue to look forward each month to reading with pleasure and instruction the notes of the month, and all other articles.

"May you continue publication with increased circulation and success."

W. H. Thompson.

"I was associated with the LABOUR MONTHLY at the beginning of this period and I have, of course, followed its progress with great interest.

"There was never a time when it was more necessary to emphasise the importance of good international Labour relations than the present time, and I hope the LABOUR MONTHLY will continue to play the same prominent part as it has played during the last 25 years in trying to achieve this object."

Eugene Varga, Moscow.

"My best greetings and congratulations to LABOUR MONTHLY on its 25th anniversary, and my sincerest wishes for its further successful and fruitful activities in the interest of the British labour movement."

Reginald Bridgeman.

"At the present juncture, when treaties of liberation and peace are being framed and the fate of millions hangs upon their scientific preparation, it is good that the LABOUR MONTHLY is still vigorously alive. Never before in man's history has such a dazzling prospect of progress been presented to the world's workers as that which the crushing of fascism now presents, but it is evident that disastrous mistakes may be made through ignorance or insufficient appreciation of the economic principles of Marxism, which it has been the aim of the LABOUR MONTHLY consistently to explain.

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"Especially must the LABOUR MONTHLY be honoured for the solicitude with which it has always studied the position of the colonial peoples. Now that the whole colonial system is approaching its end I hope that the formerly oppressed nations will avail themselves of the right of free peoples to read what they choose and that in this way a vastly extended field of influence will be open to the LABOUR MONTHLY throughout the English-reading world.

AFRICA.

From: INKULULEKO (FREEDOM), Johannesburg.

"From the people of South Africa of all races and colours, we send greetings to LABOUR MONTHLY after its first twenty-five years. The magazine has been a source of leadership and inspiration to all those fighting for a democratic South Africa on the road to Socialism, a clear beacon of Marxist thought in a rapidly changing world. Its contribution to *our* cause and *our* progress has been one we shall never forget.

(Sgd.) E. T. MOFUTSANYANA (*Editor*).

From: THE GUARDIAN, Cape Town.

"The *Guardian* extends its heartiest wishes and congratulations to the LABOUR MONTHLY on the silver jubilee of its publication. This periodical has proved an inspiring and stimulating force in the lives of thousands of readers, both in England and overseas, and we hope that it will continue to grow from strength to strength in future years."

(Sgd.) CHRISTINE CASH (*Acting Editor*).

"Even though we read your publication only since the last two years, we have appreciated the work it accomplishes to strengthen the good relations between the people and to unite fraternally all the workers. We wish the LABOUR MONTHLY to continue making the greatest strides deserved by the wonderful cause it defends."

DARIEU, LIBERATION, Casablanca, Morocco.

AUSTRALIA.

From: TRIBUNE, Sydney.

"Its unremitting efforts on behalf of the working-class movement has won for it a unique place in Labour journalism."

(Sgd.) E. CAMPBELL (*Editor*).

From: COMMUNIST REVIEW, Sydney.

"Best wishes on your 25th Anniversary for a successful future for your splendid magazine, which is highly regarded by Australian readers. We remember well your fight for unity against fascism at the time when such a policy was unpopular in many quarters.

"Today, the fight is to win the peace and defeat the forces of imperialist reaction who would set back the clock of popular progress and prepare the way for new wars.

"Australian workers count on your journal to fight as fearlessly today as in the past, and are confident that the cause of peace and progress will triumph in this fight, just as the long struggle against fascist Germany, Italy and Japan was in the end crowned with success."

(Sgd.) L. L. SHARKEY (*Editor*).

BELGIUM.

From: DRAPEAU ROUGE, Brussels.

"Hearty greetings from the *Drapeau Rouge* and from *Renovation* for your 25th anniversary and wishes for the complete victory in your fight for the happiness of working people."

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BURMA

From: THE RANGOON REVIEW, Rangoon.

"May your thoughtful criticism of the ever-erring British Government continue to check the greater mischief that would be done but for journals like yours.

"We that yet exist in a dependent country place much value on your MONTHLY. We hope that its wisdom will prevail upon the Imperialist obstinacy of the British Government and save the proud British nation from precipitous ruin."

(Sgd.) BELA MUKERJI.

CEYLON

From: CENTRAL COMMITTEE, CEYLON COMMUNIST PARTY, CEYLON.

"Greetings to LABOUR MONTHLY on completing twenty-five years of valuable service to the working-class movement, not only of Great Britain, but also of all countries where the English language is understood.

"We in Ceylon have always regarded your magazine as an important promoter of unity between the struggles of the labour movement in Britain and the national-liberation movements of the colonial peoples of the present British Empire.

"Our young socialist movement has derived much benefit from the study of the articles you have published. They have not only focused the X-ray of Marxism on the ever-changing international situation, but have also provided us with many theoretical and practical lessons which we have usefully applied in tackling the problems of our own country.

"On behalf of the Ceylon Communist Party, I wish LABOUR MONTHLY long life and a continuous record of valuable service in the fight for Marxism against all forms of political and philosophical philistinism and in the struggle of the international labour movement for unity, freedom, democracy, peace and world socialism."

(Sgd.) PIETER KEUNEMAN (*General Secretary*, Ceylon Communist Party).

CUBA.

From: DIALECTICA FUNDAMENTOS, Havana.

"*Dialectica Fundamentos* and all Cuban Marxist publications greet LABOUR MONTHLY in its 25th anniversary of splendid educative and political work."

(Sgd.) CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ (*Editor*).

DENMARK.

"For years the LABOUR MONTHLY has contributed to the education Socialists in Denmark through the number of copies read here, and more through the articles translated and printed by our monthly, *Tiden*. We a convinced that the LABOUR MONTHLY is destined to be the greatest Marx monthly paper of the English speaking world, promoting international co-ope tion and unity of progressive forces. The skill and endurance of its editor are us one more guarantee that the aim will be reached."

(Sgd.) MARTIN NIELSEN, M.P., *Editor*, TIDEN.

EGYPT.

From: AL FAGR AL GADID, Review of National and Intellectual Liberati Cairo.

"Not one progressive Egyptian but has enormously gained by the rea of the LABOUR MONTHLY, which has been one of the best links between us the world struggle for peace and liberty.

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"This anniversary coincides with one of the most critical situations facing the Egyptian movement which fights with ever-growing strength for the realisation of Egypt's real independence and civil liberties. The Egyptian progressive workers and intellectuals know well that their struggle against British Imperialism and its supporters in Egypt is backed by the fraternal sympathy of the British working-class and its allies.

"We are sure that the coming years in the life of the LABOUR MONTHLY—which we hope will be very long—will still more contribute to strengthen international solidarity between all the peace loving peoples of the world.

(Sgd.) AHMED KASHAI SALEH (*for the Editorial Board*).

FINLAND.

"On the 25th anniversary of your paper we send you our best comrade greetings. We wish you furthermore good work for developing the theoretical knowledge of the working-class and for realisation of socialism."

KOMMUNISTI (*theoretical periodical of the Finnish Communist Party*).

HUNGARY.

From: SZABAD NEP, Budapest.

"We assure you, as your sister publication, we highly appreciate the valuable and useful work by which your magazine was contributing and furthering the labour movement through a quarter of a century, and hope that your work will continuously be successful also in the future." (Sgd.) HORVATH.

NIGERIA

"So long as LABOUR MONTHLY realises that socialism knows no frontier, territorial or racial, and that in its death grip with capitalism, Africa cannot be content with being a mere spectator, so long will it fulfil its mission as an evangelist of inter-racial co-operation.

"We look forward to the future with hope and trust that socialism will spread over our great continent in order to revive the stature of man in Africa and enable the African to have sufficient food, healthy homes, comfortable raiment and a fair share of the necessities and luxuries of life.

"Today, Africans vegetate under the grinding heel of capitalism and imperialism. Tomorrow, we hope to "resurrect" and join the rest of mankind in the vanguard of socialism—to enjoy the good things of the earth.

The *West African Pilot* greets you. Congratulations."

(Sgd.) NNAMDI AZIKIWE, Onitsha.

"We of the *Daily Comet*, in this neglected and often forgotten part of the world, are arrayed in force with you in the struggle for the welfare and prosperity of the working-class.

"We believe that our united effort cannot fail: we look forward with you to a golden dawn."

(Sgd.) GEORGE I. MBADIWE (*Editor*), Lagos.

NETHERLANDS.

"On behalf of the Editorial Board and more than 12,000 readers of the Dutch Marxist review, *Politiek en Cultuur*, we are happy to offer to you our sincere congratulations on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the LABOUR MONTHLY.

"In the past your instructive and widely-read review has often been helpful to understand the struggle of the working-class in England and on the Continent. We express the hope, or rather, we are sure it will continue to do so in the present rising tide of Socialism." POLITIEK EN CULTUUR, Amsterdam.

Continued on page 228

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Book Reviews

British Restaurants

British Restaurants: an enquiry by the National Council of Social Service (*Oxford University Press*, 3*s*6*d*).

THE MATERIAL in the book is based upon an inquiry made by the National Council of Social Service and practically every aspect of communal feeding is dealt with. British Restaurant provision, like a number of municipal services, is patchy in its extent. Quality is as unequal as quantity and premises vary from very bad to extremely bright, mural-decorated halls. All sorts of people use them, workers, manual and clerical, shopkeepers, students, housewives and old people. The managements and staffs are always homely and, as many interrogated persons remarked on their questionnaires, "we can see the kitchen and the way the food is cooked and served." Figures given show that public knowledge and support of the Restaurants grew considerably from 1942 to 1944. Some of the reasons: "convenience," "good food," "cheapness," "quick service"—these were higher on the list than "helps the rations," "no one to cook," too far to go home." There is not an English county without its British Restaurant. They are often preferred to works canteens, as these are exclusive to a works, generally with distinctions between managerial, clerical and manual employees, with accusations of favouritism expressed by the latter, often justified. An interesting statement is that, from a questionnaire issued to commercial caterers, 71.6 per cent. of the replies agreed that the Restaurants had not been a competition to their establishments and a number of these people recognised the social purpose to be served by their continuance.

There is still a gap to be filled in the provision of meals. Many workers are still away from their home districts, the provision of school meals should relieve the housewife of cooking a midday meal for herself, and the food situation is more critical now than ever before. The British Restaurant service must form an essential part of national food policy and give attention to nutritive food values. Probably the stimulus of competition from municipal service, placing food and social values before profit, will have a salutary effect on all types of private catering. It would certainly benefit the consumer.

LEN POWELL.

A new "Poetics"?

Marxism and Poetry by George Thomson (Lawrence & Wishart, 2*s*6*d*, 64 pp.).

THERE IS much in this little book that is both admirable and moving. It is admirable as a modern and Marxist view of the origins and early development of poetry, of its relation with primitive society, with magic, with labour, of the relation between the ancient "bard" and the society for which he improvises and of epic and drama in their earlier phases. It is moving because Thomson has a large passion for poetry, a concern for it which looks out over and above the cliques and coteries of the contemporary literary world. He knows of their existence, and describes them justly, without rancour; he even manages to be undepressed by them and to hold fast his hope for poetry in the future.

In this hopeful prospect, there is much that is strongly reminiscent of Connolly's *Labour in Irish History*, one of the best Marxist booklet yet written in English. And the resemblance probably goes fairly deep, to Thomson's profound concern with the Irish. Just as Connolly presents socialism as a way for the Irish people to return to a higher and better form of that Gaelic communal society of which the foreign invaders robbed them, so Thomson holds out the hope to the future poet that he may, by the coming of socialism, find himself once more in a society to which poetry is organic. For him, the most fortunate of all living poets is Jamboul, the Kazakh bard, "a primitive poet who had hardly lost his status under tribal society when he recovered it under socialism."

The best thing about the book is that it is likely to be helpful and even inspiring to any younger poets (let us hope there are some) who are groping their own way forward under the impulse of feelings sincere if naive, guided by the standard "classics" of the schools, and untouched by the confusions, the scepticisms, hesitations and cramping fashions of the

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accepted metropolitans of poetry. For them, it may well prove a fruitful new "Poetics."

Yet even for them, his "bardic" emphasis should be balanced by a recognition of the possibility of another kind of poetry: the tight, tense, spare intellectual poetry of which the Italians are the greatest masters —the poetry of Dante, Michelangelo, Leopardi.

H.S.D.

Facts on Germany

In Germany Now. The Diary of a Soldier by William Peters, Foreword by N. N. Dodd, M.P. (Progress Publishing Co. Ltd., 3*s*6*d*).

PETERS IS a German anti-fascist, who served with the British Army. He worked as an army interpreter. The Diary covers August-December, 1945. It is a factual report: impressions from Cologne, Aachen, Berlin and Hanover. The discussions the author had with all kinds of Germans gives a revealing picture of the state of mind of the German people after years of Nazi domination. The difference of regimes in the British and Soviet zones is illustrated by the experiences of everyday life. Every reader can easily judge where the task of rebuilding democracy is tackled more efficiently.

J. W.

Pollitt on Czechoslovakia

Impressions of Czechoslovakia by H. Pollitt (The Communist Party, 1*s*).

THIS IS a nicely produced, well-illustrated pamphlet giving a lively report of H. Pollitt's visit to Czechoslovakia. Pollitt attended the Congress of the Communist Party, held at the end of March, in Prague. But he also visited coal mines and factories in the Kladno mining district, the capital of Moravia, Brno, and the tragic village Lidice. Thus the pamphlet gives not only a clear outline of the policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia which made this party the leader of the nation, the writing and driving force of the national front, the rebuilder of the country on new lines, but also an impressive picture of the mass enthusiasm and the hard determination to work in a new way which inspires the common people. Pollitt concludes his enthusiastic report with the assurance that it will be the first country outside the U.S.S.R. to establish Socialism.

The pamphlet will do a great service in destroying the silly stories spread about what is going on behind Churchill's "iron curtain."

J. W.

Labour M.P.s on Austria

Austria, 1946, by Dr. S. W. Jeger, M.P., and Maurice Orbach, M.P. (St. Botolph Publishing Co. Ltd., 2*s*).

LABOUR MEMBERS have done a useful job by travelling to Europe and giving their own unbiased first-hand impressions, which, as a rule, are very different from the official story. The two Labour members have been in all occupation zones and have made contacts both with common Austrian people and with responsible political leaders and with soldiers and officers of the occupation army.

The general impression one gets from this objective, critical report is not reassuring. The people are hungry, black marketeering is rampant, the zone barriers make economic reconstruction much more difficult and the Austrian Government complains that their efforts for de-nazification are not helped, but hindered, by allied control. One wonders what is the purpose of Allied occupation if well-known Nazis are kept in office by British authorities against the wishes of Austrian authorities. "We found in conversation," the report says, "a reluctance on the part of some of the British authorities to accept de-nazification as wholly necessary."

A disquieting feature is the apparent lack of friendly relations between the allied occupation armies. Anti-Russian propaganda stories are freely peddled both by Austrians and by British officers. When the authors of the report took the trouble to investigate some such stories, they easily found out that they were invented. Nor could they find any proof for the many stories about political pressure in the Russian zone. In fact, the Socialist leaders, Dr. Renner and Dr. Schaerf said: "When the Russians were in complete control of the country there was much more freedom."

J. W.

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25th Anniversary Greetings. *Continued from page* 225

NEW ZEALAND.

"The position and prestige of LABOUR MONTHLY is unique in New Zealand. For twenty-five years its analysis of current events has been quoted virtually as the last word by Communists and other progressives. In the most trying periods of world history the MONTHLY and Palme Dutt's Notes of the Month are eagerly awaited. Long life to your magnificent magazine."

(Sgd.) SCOTT, *Editor*, PEOPLE'S VOICE.

PALESTINE.

"Thousands of workers in Palestine who are reading regularly many of LABOUR MONTHLY's publications translated in *Kol Hamm*, share wholeheartedly the encouraging event of your paper's 25th anniversary.

'For 25 years LABOUR MONTHLY served sincerely the cause of uncompromising struggle *against fascism and reaction, against warmongers, and for peace, democracy and socialism.*

"Fervently and consistently, LABOUR MONTHLY conducted the fight for unity of the British labour movement and rallied the international working-class around the Soviet Union, the fortress of peace and liberty. With skill and sincerity, LABOUR MONTHLY is fighting for the freedom of the colonial peoples who are being oppressed by British imperialism. The solidarity with our hard struggle for a Jewish-Arab agreement and an independent democratic Palestine, based on equal rights for Jews and Arabs, which found its expression on the pages of LABOUR MONTHLY, has encouraged and strengthened the forces of progress and democracy in our oppressed country.

(Sgd.) ESTHER VILENSKA, DR. M. BILETZKY, JONA TOMKIN, J. FINEBERG,
Members of Editorial Board.

P. C. Joshi, (Secretary of the Communist Party of India.)

"LABOUR MONTHLY, during 25 years of its glorious career, has acted as the patient teacher of the revolutionary vanguard of British labour which stands shoulder to shoulder with us in our battle against British imperialism.

"By its relentless exposure of social democracy and its persistent fight for the unity of international labour in its fight against imperialist reaction and war for the freedom of the peoples and socialism it has played a proud role in forging the bond between the growing liberation movements in India and the colonies and the advanced sections of the labour movement in Great Britain.

"Today, with Indian freedom on the agenda of the day we confidently look to it to mould effectively progressive and labour opinion to realise that the battle for Socialism in Britain implies immediate independence of India. We know it will fearlessly fight, as it has always done, for a decisive break with the Tory policy of the past that is being continued even today by the cabinet mission when it puts the blame on Indian differences rather than the transfer of power to Indian hands and recognise Indian independence.

"On the 25th anniversary of LABOUR MONTHLY and at a very critical stage in Indo-British relations, we greet LABOUR MONTHLY with the realisation that the sooner the policies advocated by LABOUR MONTHLY become the policy of British Labour, the better it will be both for Britain and India, inaugurating a new historic epoch when you will go forward to build socialism and will lay the foundations for a new, free democracy for our 400,000,000 and we both together will pull our weight for peace in the world and abiding friendship between the nations."

(Greetings from U.S.A. are held over—Ed. L.M.)

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RECONSTRUCTION FUND (Continued from page ii of cover).

regularity and this faithful aid has enabled us to avoid any crisis, though we are never without a degree of anxiety. That is why, month after month, we have something to say about donations and why (until with greater paper supplies our circulation can be raised) we shall be compelled to remind our readers that we cannot survive without this special revenue.

The Editorial Board is looking forward to the time, not far off now, we hope, when the magazine can be brought back to its old page-size, have ninety-six pages again and be printed in larger type on much better paper. We shall then be involved in heavier costs and must recover as quickly as possible the large readership sacrificed when we had to cut down our circulation as paper supplies shrunk. That will be a difficult period—much greater costs at once and revenue only gradually stepping up. Then we shall need the financial support of all our friends amongst the magazine's readership.

It has been our aim to raise beforehand some of the finance needed to see us through that period of difficulty but, unfortunately, the monthly donations have never been sufficient to do more than meet current needs. We make the most earnest appeal, therefore, to every reader who feels the significance of this 25th birthday of ours to make a special and extra donation to what we might term our Re-construction Fund.

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